

Vehicle & Equipment Tracking – Making it Work

A major challenge for all fleet operators, whatever industry sector they operate in, is how to manage drivers, vehicles and other mobile assets when they are “out on the road” and effectively out of sight.

Telematics-based vehicle tracking and fleet management solutions, that utilise GPS (Global Positioning System) satellite technology give vehicle and equipment operators control over their assets and employees, in a way never thought possible only a few years ago. Maximum optimisation isn't the impossible dream that it once was, and businesses can now see at a glance exactly where their assets are and co-ordinate and protect them far more effectively.

MAKING IT WORK FOR YOU

Despite what some might tell you, vehicle tracking technology cannot be all things to all people, and installing a system won't immediately solve all transport-related problems or optimise a vehicle operation overnight. Promises of data on every aspect of your fleet won't help you either unless there is an effective means to transfer this into knowledge.

Not many companies in the telematics field are making money today – a major proportion of Service providers go bust within the first two years of business. The field is overdue a shakeout and we will definitely see some consolidation in this sector. Make sure when you are selecting a supplier that it has a good track record, an excellent reputation and, not least, a sound balance sheet

Choosing a vehicle tracking system takes careful consideration. It is about businesses knowing what they really want, not just now, but also in the future. Focusing on what realistically can be achieved is essential, but businesses need to understand that their requirements will change, so any telematics solutions has to possess the flexibility to evolve and adapt to these changing needs.

Furthermore, no two businesses possess the same needs, so it is critical to select a solution that can be tailored to specific requirements. Imagine the varying needs amongst electrical contractors with every single one having individual requirements and operating with different working practices.

For example, protecting vehicles and assets against theft requires different functionality than a work flow management and job scheduling solution, but a vehicle tracking system needs to possess the flexibility to handle both should this be needed. It is worth considering the benefits of selecting a partner that can develop a bespoke tracking solution rather than procuring an off-the-shelf device that may lack sufficient adaptability and expandability.

To best utilise a vehicle tracking solution, there needs to be substantial levels of commitment from both the telematics service provider and the fleet operator itself. This doesn't just mean financially, company's need to also set aside some resource to develop and manage the process. A company also needs to communicate openly with all its stakeholders – whether this is directors, employees, drivers, customers or suppliers – to ensure everyone understands the reasoning for the solution and the potential benefits.

Vehicle tracking and telematics systems can fundamentally change the way companies do business, and if it doesn't then the solution is not working. What is needed is clearer thinking to define what will add value to a business and how companies can work smarter using the knowledge that this technology offers.

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